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"IN THE SWEAT SHOP."

From the Yiddish of Morris Rosenfeldt.

OH, the roar of the shop
 Where the wheels never stop!
 The wild rushing machine,
 Oh, it maddens me keen,
 Until oft I forget,
 In the tumult and sweat,
 That I have any life
 That's apart from the strife;
 For I grow so distraught
 That my ego is naught,
 I become a machine.

For I work and I work
 There's no gain, should I shirk
 And I toil and I moil,
 And I moil and I toil;
 But for whom? And for what?
 It ne'er enters my thought.
 Can I think, can I ask?
 I bend over my task,
 For, I'm but a machine.

There's no time to ask why?
 Nor to feel, nor to sigh,
 For the work ne'er relents,
 And it deadens all sense
 As it ruthlessly maims
 Every soul, when it aims

To attain to its rest
In what's noblest and best;
To uplift and inspire
For a life that is higher,
 But alas! the machine.

Fleet the moments give way,
Speeding hours make a day;
Swift as sails in their flight
Doth the day chase the night,
And as if to outrace
Or to march their mad pace
Do I drive without pause,
To no end, for no cause,
 Do I drive the machine.

There's a clock in the shop;
It runs on without stop;
Always points; ticks away;
Strikes each hour of the day.
I've been told there is found
Sense and meaning profound
In its striking the chime
And its marking the time
 For the running machine.

I recall but the theme,
Like vague thoughts of a dream:
That the clock like the heart,
By its beat, well may start
Throbbing life in the man,
And arouse—yes it can—
Something else; as to what
That may be, I've forgot;
Do not know, do not ask;
I bend over my task,
 For I'm but a machine.

There are times when the clock
Seems to scorn and to mock,
And I well understand
What is meant by each hand ;—
What the dull, ticking sound
Says, to drive and to hound
And to goad me so sore,
As it cries evermore :
"Get to work ! Get to work !
Never pause, never shirk,
For thou art a machine !"

And the tones that I hear,
As they ring in my ear,
Keep repeating the threats
Of the boss, as he frets ;
And I quail at his frown,
Which seems to look down
From the face of the clock,
With its scorn and its mock,
As it goads me so sore
While it cries evermore :
"Thou must sew ; thou machine !"

Lo, the man in my heart
Is aroused to his part,
And the slave in my breast
Sinks at last into rest ;
For the hour, it has come,
When a deed must be done.
"Be an end to this strife !
Yea, an end to such life !
I will stop the machine !"

Hark ! the whistle, the boss
All my mind 's at a loss

And my reason's o'erthrown.
Am I left all alone?
In the tumult and sweat
I seem to forget,
For I am so distraught
That my ego is naught,
Do not know, do not ask;
I bend over my task,
For I'm but a machine.

HENRY BERKOWITZ.